

between them. And it is astonishing how subtly clever even quite small children can be in bringing about tensions between parents, or between mother and nurse, causing one to criticise the other and to side with the child against the other. I have watched the actual process many times with certain children, and marked how acutely they seem to appreciate the weak places in the mutual relation of the particular grown-ups.

Psycho-analytic studies have shown moreover that this wish to separate the parents, to get in between them and win one of them to oneself, is always found in the deeper and unconscious levels of every individual mind. " He that is not with us is against us " is the child's universal cry. And when it seems that the two parents *together* are not-with-us-but-against-us, the way is opened to our ultimate terrors of loss and privation and destruction. At all costs they must be parted, and made aware of *our* needs and our demand for love.

There is another and very important factor in this attitude of the child to the presence of more than one grown-up, however, which must at least be mentioned at this point, viz. the child's *ambivalence* of feeling towards every adult, and towards both the parents singly. Even his loved mother is not only loved. She is feared and hated as well. The child inevitably feels hostile to her in part, since he early suffers inescapable denials and thwartings at her hands (as we shall see in discussing *Sexuality*). And this loving and hating of the same so important person is itself a source of great tension in his mind. But the presence of the two parents or two women brings him momentary relief from this tension—if he can part them—by enabling him to turn most of his

hostility on to the one, and so have the delight
of loving the
other more whole-heartedly. (This was
undoubtedly the
chief key to Dan's behaviour, for example, when
both Miss B.
and Mrs. L were in close relation with him.)
This ambival-
ence of feeling is of the greatest significance in
children's
social development, and I shall have to say a
good deal more
about it presently.

The degree of tension arising in this
fundamental situation
of one child with two grown-ups will naturally
depend upon
a number of factors. It will show itself in
quieter tones
with older children and with less intimate
and important